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MAKING JELLY FROM EARLY SUMMER FRUITS

An interview between Rowena Schmidt Carpenter, assistant to the chief, Bureau of Home Economics, and Fany W. Yeatman, Home economics specialist, in the National Farm and Home Hour, Friday, June 6, 1930, broadcast through WRC and 34 other radio stations associatod with the National Broadcasting Company.

Mrs. Carpenter: I have brought Mrs. Yeatman with me today to answer some of the questions that you have been asking about making jelly from early summer fruits. Before we begin the questions, I must share with you in part a definition of jelly that was published nearly twenty years ago in a University of Illinois bulletin: "Ideal fruit jelly is a beautifully colored, transparent, palatable product obtained by so treating fruit-juice that the resulting mass will quiver, not flow when removed from its mold; a product with texture so tender that it cuts easily with a spoon, and yet so firm that the angles thus produced retain their shape; a clear product that is neither syrupy, gummy, sticky, nor tough, --- This is that delicious, appetizing substance, a good fruit-jelly." Isn't that a choice description? It seems that nothing could be added, and yet I see Mrs. Yeatman nodding her head. What are you thinking, Mrs. Yeatman?

Mrs. Yeatman: Perfect jelly must have not only sparkling clearness and quivering tenderness of texture, but also the delightful fresh fruit flavor by which it is identified, Mrs. Carpenter.

Mrs. Carpenter: Why yes, of course, I suppose it is for its flavor that most of us treasure our favorite jelly. And now will you give us the benefit of your experience in working toward this ideal jelly, Mrs. Yeatman? What is your first bit of advice to the beginner?

Mrs. Yeatman: Well, like everything else, jelly to be good must be made carefully from the right materials. The fruit used for jelly must be neither too ripe nor too green. I find that a mixture of about equal parts of under-ripe and of ripe fruit is ideal. The under-ripe fruits gives the best texture to the jelly, and the ripe fruit the best flavor. There must be pectin and acid in fruit to make good jelly, and the juice must be carefully extracted, the method depending upon the fruit that is used.

Mrs. Carpenter: Can you outline a method of extracting juice that would work for all early summer fruits?

Mrs. Yeatman: Yes, The first fruits of the season for jelly are blackberries, black raspberries, red raspberries and currants. Juice can be extracted from berries without the addition of water. However, I do often use from 1/4 to 1/2 a cup of water to the pound of fruit in extracting the juice from blackberries, black raspberries and currants because their flavor is so rich that the juice can stand a little diluting. These fruits cook very quickly. I plan on from 3 to 10 minutes for cooking, depending upon the condition of the fruit. Straining the juice is important too. Canton flannel jelly bags are best, made with the fuzzy side of the material in. A double thickness of good quality cheese cloth is also good. The jelly bag should be suspended from a wire rack or a wooden support. When the flow of juice stops, the bag should be pressed lightly with the flat sides of two knives to start the flow again.

Mrs. Carpenter: Just a minute, Mrs. Yeatman, While we leave that juice dripping, tell us how much fruit you would cook at one time.

Mrs. Yeatman: Not more than 6 to 8 pounds at once, and if I use as much as 8 pounds in one lot, I divide the juice in half and work up each part separately. As a rule a pound of fruit yields about a cup of juice, and I work with not more than six and preferably about 4 cups of juice at once, using a large flat bottom kettle for rapid boiling. Better jelly is obtained from working with fairly small amounts of juice. The evaporation of moisture is quicker, and the natural color and flavor of the fruit are retained in the jelly. It really takes less time, too, in the long run.

Mrs. Carpenter: And now to return to the extracted juice, ready to make into jelly. Tell us about the amount of sugar, and your method of cooking.

Mrs. Yeatman: The amount of sugar is a very important point. Too little sugar gives a tough unpalatable jelly, while too much makes a syrupy, runny jelly. To one cup of carefully extracted juice, I use from 3/4 to 1 cup of sugar. The mixture of juice and sugar should be cooked down rapidly until it is so thick that it makes very heavy drops that run together before they fall from the side of a spoon. This blending of heavy drops is called sheeting off, and that is the best test I know for the proper concentration of the jelly. The finished jelly is poured out into low sterilized hot jelly glasses. Take care to pour the jelly into the middle of the glass so that no drops stick to the sides above the level of the jelly. Then when the jelly has set, the hot paraffine that is poured on can make a tight seal. To insure a high, closefitting seal, the glass is rotated while the layer of paraffine is still liquid. Jelly like all other home preserved products should be labeled with name and date, and then stored in a cool, dry place.

Mrs. Carpenter: I had a question a while ago but didn't want to interrupt you. When you mentioned the early summer jelly fruits, I wondered why you omitted strawberries and cherries I have tasted such delicious strawberry and cherry jelly.

Mrs. Yeatman: Yes, so have I, Mrs. Carpenter, but I did not include those fruits in my list because they require rather different treatment than the other berries. As a rule they do not contain sufficient pectin to make jelly of a good standard. The strawberry and cherry jelly that we have found excellent was doubtless made by the addition of some pectin extract. Though, as a matter of fact some strawberries do contain sufficient pectin and will jell perfectly if one tablespoon of lemon juice is added to each cup of strawberry juice.

Mrs. Carpenter: Thank you, Mrs. Yeatman. It all sounds so easy and so sure when you tell us how you do it. And now Goodbye, Homemakers, until next Friday, when Miss Ruth O'Brien will talk to you about the problems you face when trying to buy garments that fit.